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African Union Commission, Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) urge the implementation of Trade Facilitation measures.



Port Louis, Mauritius – 20 September 2017. The African Union Commission in collaboration with the Mauritius Revenue Authority organized the 3rd African Union Customs Experts Trade Facilitation Forum. The three days forum is organized in line with the Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade, endorsed by the African union Assembly of Heads of State and Government through their 2012 decision (Assembly / AU-Dec 394 [XVIII]) on Boosting Intra African Trade and fast tracking the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by 2017 as an indicative date and as well as taking into account the coming into force of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) on 22 February 2017. The ultimate objective of the forum is to assist

AU Member States in their endeavor related to the simplification and harmonization of customs procedures including their documentation and regulations to boost intra-African trade within the context of the Agenda 2063 ten year implementation plan.

The meeting was attended by delegates from nearly 30 (Thirty) African Union Member States, representatives of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Private Sectors, and experts from the African Union Commission. Mr. William Murashwa Gadzikwa of Zimbabwe Revenue Authority Chaired the meeting in Zimbabwe's capacity as chair of the AU Sub-Committee Director General of Customs. Due to his delayed arrival, Mr. Gasper Konneh delivered an address in his capacity as Vice- Chair of the AU Sub Committee of Director General of Customs of Cameroon.

Director General of Mauritius Revenue Authority Mr. Sudhamo Lal, welcomed all the participants to the Forum and indicated that the implementation of trade facilitation measures will bring numerous benefits to the African Continent through improvements in the areas of Transparency and fairness, good governance and modernization of the trade supply chain. Mr. Lal highlighted some of the achievements of the MRA customs department in terms of trade facilitation and tax administration reforms.

After thanking the Government of Mauritius and Mauritius Revenue authority for organizing the Forum, Mr. Gasper Konneh Vice Chair of the African Union Sub- Committee of Directors General of Customs said "It's our hope that the quality of the outcomes of this Forum will be commensurate with our high expertise in the various issues and with the high expectations placed on us by our various countries and organizations who have invested their limited resource to ensure the effective participation of delegates in this forum".

Addressing the participants, Mrs. Treasure Maphanga, Director of Trade and Industry extended her gratitude to the Government and People of the Republic of Mauritius for hosting the meeting and thanked the participants for responding positively to the invitations to attend the meeting. "The Commission of the African Union is in the process of developing a draft AU Trade Facilitation Strategy for the consideration of African Union Member States and we believe that it will facilitate the implementation of both, the WTO TFA and the AU's BIAT Program" she said. Mrs Treasure applauded the Africa's customs Administrations for undertaking various modernization programs in respective countries so as to ease the way of doing business on the continent. "What we are talking about shall undoubtedly contribute to the attainment of our common vision for Africa in Agenda 2063, but what we need to keep in mind is that we need to act on it with the urgency required as if we were implementing Agenda Now" she concluded.

In his Speech, Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Director, Customs Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), welcomed the participants to the Mauritius Multilingual Regional Training Center for the meeting and raised the importance of Trade facilitation Agreement (TFA) that entered into force in February 2017. He strongly said that the implementation of TFA measures is a mandatory and no longer a choice. In addition Mr. Ramburun urged Customs administrations to be more forceful in various forums where Trade facilitation is on Agenda. He welcomed the opportunity to share experiences in order to move forward together.

Finally, Mr. Lal, Director General of Mauritius Revenue Authority officially declared the Forum open and wished a fruitful deliberation.

The Report of the outcome of the Meeting will be submitted to the Director Generals of Customs in November for consideration and adaptation.



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